



OKANAGAN NATION ALLIANCE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sockeye Salmon Landmark Return 2014 Syilx Economic Pilot Fishery Set to Open

Westbank, BC – Okanagan Nation Territory July 8, 2014. The Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) Member Communities are preparing to celebrate and honour another historic return of Okanagan Sockeye Salmon to Osoyoos and Skaha lakes this upcoming July-August 2014.

"It has been the perseverance of our leaders, and people past and present that have pushed us to ensure Salmon were once again able to return to their habitat to thrive" stated Chief Clarence Louie. "I remember the late Chief Albert Saddleman as one of those leaders who was committed to assert our Title and Rights to ensure that the local sockeye salmon fishery would be revitalized, sustained and managed by the Okanagan Peoples", he further added.

Preparations for the opening of these fisheries included a traditional offering ceremony conducted last week. Food, Social, Ceremonial fisheries for the Okanagan People are expected to begin soon in the month of July and continue into early September. In addition, recreational and economic fisheries will begin in August.

The Chiefs Executive Council (CEC) also recognize that through their working partnerships that support the overall Okanagan Nation fisheries specific policy and Management initiatives are cooperatively developed and sustained. With combining and respecting the CEC Vision, they are entering into an Economic Pilot with a unique fishing experience this year. This unique fishing experience builds upon a project that is developed to include a guided fishing component into the economic portion of the Sockeye return to Osoyoos Lake. Today the Okanagan continue to develop innovative models by piloting an artisanal troll fishing that combines experienced anglers from the region alongside Okanagan Nation member Fishers.

Starting in 2014, this additional aspect of the Okanagan Nation's Economic Pilot is best described as including a unique artisanal fishing opportunity for anglers to not only catch their recreational allotted fish quota but to also assist ONA with their economic harvest as well. This is made possible thanks to a collaborative initiative with the ONA. This pilot fishery is moving forward with a clear understanding of the priority of our Food Social and Ceremonial principles remain paramount.

The ONA Economic Pilot includes a cooperative arrangement between with the Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB) facilitated through the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre, Spirit Ridge Resort, and the Nk'Mip campground. Charlotte Stringam, General Manager of the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Center, states, *"By the collaboration led by the ONA, the OIB is able to pilot its support for members who want to revitalize their fishing practices and support the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre. We are privileged to be a part of informing and teaching the public the story of the "Return of Sockeye Salmon" to the Okanagan Territory. It is not only a story, but it was a way of life and self sufficiency for us as a people.*

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